

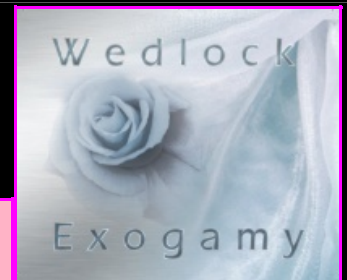
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WEDLOCK "Exogamy": A Review



WEDLOCK "Exogamy": CD/Music review by Jed Ryan. North Carolina-based band Wedlock– Paul Allgood, Baxter Smith, and Lee Whitsel– don't even appear on the cryptic cover art of their album "Exogamy". Similarly, the title of the CD is an enigma as well. Just what does "exogamy" mean? It is defined, officially, as "(1) marriage outside of a specific group, especially as required by custom or law; or (2) sexual relations between individuals of a particular population or species that are not closely related". Hmm... But once you listen to the instantly infectious beats of the first track of "Exogamy", however, there's no mystery to Wedlock's appeal: amazing lyrics, amazing vocals, and amazing sounds. And, I might add, some serious and important themes explored as well: "Reverend Charisma", the first track, sends an important message about religious fanaticism– of ANY faith– and the danger of blind allegiance to any one agenda. "Just Because", the last track, sends an important message about hate crime.

First off, Wedlock are gifted lyricists. The group experiments with

many different forms of aural simulation on this CD ("Dear Diary", for example, is a rather avant garde monologue with some self-indulgent special sound effects), but the dance music is likely to be Wedlock's calling card. Many of the dance tracks deserve to become new after-hours classics. Traditionally, dance music through the years never concentrated on the lyrics— if there were any words at all. But "Disco Pharma", "Still Unsatisfied", and "Asseswaving" ("Asses waving"— get it?) are the smartest dance tunes you're likely to hear in a while. Similarly, "Maggie & Hiedi", ostensibly a simple story about two female friends, rises up a few notches with its deliciously quirky sounds and lyrics ("*We are age-impaired and serotonin flooded...*"). Then, there's the vocals. Lead vocalist Paul Allgood's supple voice can go from hauntingly seductive on "Reverend Charisma", to smooth and boy-next-door sexy on "Black Sundress", and beyond...

"Reverend Charisma" is the standout track on "Exogamy". Featuring a beat that's gently pulsating yet fiercely pounding at the same time and awash with metaphors and symbolism, we first believe that the track is likening religious ecstasy with sexual ecstasy, with just a touch of danger thrown in... :

*"Do you believe every word, from my lying lips?
I'll promise you heaven, from an apocalypse
It's because of the skin, you're living in,
That makes you all so guilty of sin
I'll quench the thirst, your soul desires,
Because I know, I'm the chosen Messiah
If you drink the cup, inside of your hand,
You can follow me, to the promised land."*

The rhythm is addicting. But listening to "Reverend Charisma" is similar to when we first heard the eerie, melancholy charm of Nina Simone's "Strange Fruit". When the listener, if they don't know already, learns what that classic song is about (lynchings down South), it sends shivers down the spine. We are seduced in a similar way with "Reverend Charisma"; the song takes on a new, dark meaning when we discover that Wedlock is singing about Reverend Jim Jones, the cult leader who was largely responsible for a 1978 mass suicide (over 900 people) in Jonestown, Guyana. Suddenly, the energizing marching-band beat becomes the theme for a parade of lemmings marching toward the sea to commit a mass self-drowning. The song was inspired by an event over 30 years ago, but the message is more timely than ever. Another gem on the CD is "Black Sundress". Paying tribute to Smokey Robinson's 1967 hit "I Second that Emotion", the song borrows that same lightweight sexy appeal, with just a touch of mystery ("*A wire from Greta told me all I need to know...*" Hmmm again...) .

"Black Sundress" features soulful vocals by Allgood as well as some superior piano work and lots of electronic hooks:

*"May Marie, don't misunderstand me
I know it's not for free, your psycho-candy.
Hey, Marie, I don't mean to be demanding
I'm aching for a piece of your psycho-candy."*

The song is a true delight. "Allegiance? WTF" is a bold, much deserved, ahem... "tribute" to our beloved ex-President. Even though George Dubya is out of office, the song really gets it right. And it's complete with guest vocals by W. himself! Yep, the creators of the song use some of The Idiot's own ridiculous soundbytes on the track. As I said before, Wedlock's dance tracks are guaranteed to get fans of club music out on the dancefloor. They capture the spirit of the freestyle music which dominated the airwaves in the late 80's and early '90's, when pop and dance music merged so wonderfully. (In other words, it was the music you could listen to on the radio all afternoon, and then dance your ass off to all night...). But don't expect just a retro redux with "Exogamy": This music is bold and not afraid to experiment with some very high-tech electronic ornamentation and special effects. The should-be- club anthem "Disco Pharma" features an infectious rhythm and some amazing beats. But we never forget that *Paul Allgood can sing!* The equally intense "Still Unsatisfied", for example, features grand, yearning, youthful and clear vocals matched with powerhouse beats and a hypnotizing rhythm. In "Asseswaving", Allgood sings about maintaining your individuality in the club scene while still having a great time.

Intentionally or not, Wedlock and their music can't be simply categorized. Many of their songs have mass appeal; others are something of an acquired taste. Either way, rest assured that listening to "Exogamy" is a truly unique musical experience. Which, in this day and age, we sadly don't get often enough! Visit www.WedlockMusic.com and www.MySpace.com/WedlockMusic for more!

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No Responses to “WEDLOCK “Exogamy”: A Review”

1. [Paul Allgood](#) Says: *Your comment is awaiting moderation.*



August 21st, 2009 at 3:00 pm

I wish to thank Jed Ryan, Len Rogers from Stone Wall, Jeff Hathaway, Jonathan Kidder, Kirk Bryson, Ana Mitchell, Greg Klaiber, Lee Whitsel and Baxter Smith also all who offered Wedlock any and all support through listening. We're deeply appreciative of any reviews we receive. Thanks again, Paul Allgood/Wedlock.

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